Smart Growth Technical Assistance RFQ
Proposers Conference, September 10, 2009

Questions & Answers

Q: **For the DBE/UDBE requirements, does the lead consultant for a team of consultants need to specify what percentage of the total DBE/UDBE contract goal of 5% will go to each sub-consultant?**

A: No, the requirement of 5% is for the team as a whole. The prime consultant does not need to specify the percentage for each team member.

Q: **Does this contract have a small business requirement?**

A: No.

Q: **Do you expect to select just one team of consultants? If more than one team, is there a maximum number you expect to qualify?**

A: No. MTC will consider all consultant teams that meet the minimum qualifications.   There is no pre-determined maximum number of teams we expect to qualify.

Q: **How will you assign projects?**

A: MTC will assign project to consultant teams based on the projects that are awarded to local jurisdictions through the FOCUS Technical Assistance (TA) Program. Assignments will be based on qualifications and availability. MTC and ABAG staff will consider the needs of the awarded jurisdictions to ensure that assigned consultants are a good fit for the project. A task order will be issued through the prime consultant for each project.

Q: **Given that project task orders will ultimately go to individual firms with the necessary skills, why are you requesting consultants to form teams rather than qualifying individual firms within each discipline?**

A: From a contract administrative perspective, MTC prefers to enter contracts with a few qualified teams rather than contracts with numerous individual consultants, and has used this model successfully in the past.

Q: **Will there be any further competition among qualified teams and or individual sub-consultants once a firm has been matched to a project and agreed to take on the work?**

A: No.

Q: **Who sets the project budget and who decides if it is fair? What if one firm can complete a project for less money/more quickly than a firm on another team?**

A: Local jurisdictions will be submitting projects up to $50,000 per project. These projects will be assessed by a team that will be evaluating the proposed project and budget. Following project

award, MTC will assign a consultant team to the local jurisdiction based on qualifications and availability as noted above. Once the consultant is selected, MTC will discuss the project and budget with the consultant to ensure that the proposed project can be completed within the proposed budget. If not, MTC and ABAG staff will serve as brokers between the local jurisdiction and the consultant to discuss scope of work and available budget.

Q: **Can you acquire additional team members after you are selected?**

A: Proposals/teams will be evaluated based on the team members included in each proposal. [Clarification: With the prior approval of MTC, new consultants can be added to teams after contracts are signed.]

Q: **Is it possible that some sub-/prime-consultants on the qualified teams are not used?**

A: Yes.

Q: **Can you share the applications from local jurisdictions for the Technical Assistance Program, or a list of proposed project types prior to the RFQ deadline in order to provide more clarity on the types of skills needed?**

A: The types of projects that will be awarded are those that are listed under the qualifications section in the RFQ. The FOCUS Technical Assistance (TA) Program just began accepting applications September 1, and has not reviewed applications or selected any projects yet. Therefore, MTC and ABAG staff is not prepared to release information about any projects submitted. However, ABAG and MTC staff hosted two FOCUS TA workshops – the most common types of projects raised by local jurisdictions at these workshops included projects related to parking, municipal financing, market demand, station access and TOD supportive zoning.

Since the FOCUS TA program will be accepting applications on a rolling basis, applications may come in at any time that require any of the skills noted in the RFQ.

Q: **What is meant by "Infrastructure Planning & Design" in the list of required consultant qualifications? Does it include transportation infrastructure and/or traffic engineering?**

A: The most common barriers to implementing adopted local plans related to infrastructure that we have heard about are sewer systems, other utilities or storm water management.

Q: **Have you set a maximum dollar award per jurisdiction for the FOCUS TA program?**

A: There is a maximum award of $50,000 per project, but no maximum per jurisdiction.

Q: **How will you assign sub-consultants if you award multiple similar projects (i.e. several parking studies)?**

A: As noted above, consultant selection will be based on qualifications and availability. If a consultant team is already working on a project requiring a particular set of skills, MTC would be inclined to select another consultant team from the list of qualified consultants.

Q: Scale of assignments is quite small ($50k), so administration/overhead may use up much of the budget. Is there any way to minimize this cushion?

A: MTC has worked with on-call consultants related to smart growth who have worked on discrete projects significantly less than $50,000. Administration or overhead has been built into their work and has not been a problem.

MTC will monitor this concern; if it becomes an issue, MTC and ABAG will re-assess this element of the FOCUS TA program.

Q: What is the likelihood that MTC will conduct interviews with the teams submitting proposals?

A: At this point in the process, all teams/team members should reserve the interview date as noted in the RFQ. This decision will be made during the initial evaluation process.

Q: Which team members should attend the interviews, if conducted?

A: The interview is your opportunity to present your team as the best for the contract. It will be up to your team to make this determination.

Q: The RFQ says that this program is not anticipated to support parcel-level developments. What if there is a proposed project to assess BART parking at a particular station?

A: The FOCUS TA program is intended to deal with issues broader in scope than can be addressed through site-specific or parcel-level projects. As such, the Program seeks to avoid supporting development of a single or "one-off" project near transit that does not address the broader constraints to creating successful transit-oriented development throughout an entire Priority Development Area (PDA), and that will not serve to catalyze development of the PDA as a complete community over the long term. Thus, FOCUS TA projects must address issues that affect the whole PDA (or large portion thereof) – if the particular project is located at a discrete site within the PDA, the results of the project would need to apply to the PDA overall, and not just benefit the specific site.

Q: Are there expected work products for each assigned project or are is a consultant assigned to a local jurisdiction to offer technical expertise on an on-call basis?

A: The expectation is that there will be a deliverable/s for each project. The final work product will depend on the nature of the project, but could include a written report/analysis, a design document or plan, a visual aid or technical tool, etc. The consultant will not be providing technical expertise

to local jurisdictions on an ad hoc/on-call basis; consultants will be assigned to work on specific projects outlined by a scope of work.

Q: **Could this program be used to develop a technical assistance "tool-kit" to share with local jurisdictions based on the awarded projects/project deliverables?**

A: One of the goals of the FOCUS TA program is to provide best practices to local jurisdictions based on the projects that are awarded through the program. While not yet determined, this could be developed as a component of Task 2 in the RFQ.

Q: **In Task 2, who is the audience for the technical training sessions?**

A: It is anticipated that staff affiliated with PDAs will be the audience, but it may also include local public officials.

Q: **Will it be possible to combine projects with similar themes among a few PDAs?**

A: While this may be possible, each jurisdiction will need to receive a deliverable specific to their PDA/project.